

Has London Gone Crazy About Clothes?

**"Falling Leaf" Gowns,
Harem Trouserettes,
Silk Hula-Hula
Creations and Other
Garish Get-Ups
Are Suddenly
Bursting Through
the Fog**



**Nothing Like This
Maribou Fur
Abbreviation Was
Ever Before
Seen by London
Theatregoers.
Dorothy Hazel
Dances in It and Looks Like a
Bird of Paradise.**

LONDON.
THE gray fog chrysalis has burst into a butterfly! Or, to put it more concretely, London is just crazy about clothes.

Women's clothes. Stage clothes. Scanty clothes. Snappy clothes. Gorgeous clothes. Clothes that are only skirts of silken floss. Clothes that are nothing but puffs of swan's down. Clothes that glitter. Clothes that sparkle. Clothes that hint and reveal and lure and retreat. Clothes like whizziest Paris and jazziest New York. London loves 'em!

There's the point—that staid, solid old John Bull, who always has been a bit more conservative than anybody else in his enthusiasms, is proving himself, after all, a blood brother to Broadway and the boulevards.

He's rearing back in his stall at the revue and the musical comedy and the cabaret, and he's wearing out his hands applauding cuties in the most daring raiment. They can't make the raiment too daring for John. At least, not yet. He's out-twisting Oliver in his shouts for "more"—breve!

What's the answer? Reaction to the war? Envy of Paris? Ambition to emulate New York? Or just plain high spirits?

It may be any or all of these, but the fact is that this Winter has inaugurated such a clothes transformation as the London stage has never known. Listen to what's happening:

Miss Dorothy Dickson, the British "Sally" (born in Chicago), is standing them up at the Winter Garden, where she dances in "The Cabaret Girl."

Why? Partly because she's a beauty and a sylph, but mostly because of what she has on and what she's left off.

Miss Dickson whirls out first in her famous "Falling Leaf" cloak. It's a stunning garment of orange tissue, shot with Autumn leaves of red and gold and bronze and orange. On her head she wears a snug little Gaby Deslys turban, crowned with five enormous ostrich plumes. Her audience gasps and cheers.

The cloak falls. Miss Dickson emerges a feather and a flame. She wears a skirt of crimson petals edged with ostrich. It stands out like a sail. Her beaded bodice clings close. It shimmers with emeralds and diamonds. London has never seen anything like this before. And London is not shocked. London dotes on the spectacle where, twelve months ago, the censors would have intervened.

The climax comes with Miss Dickson in the role of a glorified hula-hula dancer. Here is no "grass skirt." Woven of glossy, fest silk and flashing brilliants, it makes scarcely a pretense of hiding her twinkling legs. She shimmies—and Piccadilly is swept off its feet.

Another beauty whose exotic clothes are exciting London is Miss Heather Thatcher, a dancer. Her costumes were designed by Princess Andrew of Russia. Her interpretation of an Egyptian harem dance calls for a creation distinguished by stencil slits in waist, trouserettes and sleeves. It is advertised as the most daring costume ever shown in England.

Then there are Betty Shields, with her extravagant "screen skirt"; Dorothy

**There's a Gasp
When Dorothy
Dickson
Emerges from
Her "Falling
Leaf" Cloak in
a Feather and
Flame Skirt of
Crimson Petals
Edged with
Ostrich
Trimmings.**



Deans, whose bouffant gown appears to be modestly old-fashioned until she trips partly out of it in tights; and Phyllis Garton, a vivid brunette, with a skirt of loose panels in startling colors.

Your Broadway veteran, who has watched new edition after edition of follies, frolics and revues; who has grown accustomed to producing competition that gives him effects more and more startling each season; who has learned to yawn at barefoot dancers and nod during semicircular numbers—the sophisticated New Yorker might not find Dickson, Thatcher, Shields and company particularly quickening to his pulses.

Neither, perhaps, would Parisians. They, too, are used to extremes on the stage. Harem drapees and "screen skirts" are no novelty to the city that applauded as "artistic" the appearance last Winter of Mlle. Mitty and Mlle. Dherlys in nothing but a few fringes of beads.

But to London, never disposed toward undue frivolity and more conservative than even about extravagant fashions during the war; to steady-going, humdrum, quiet London the new stage styles are breath-taking.

They were new to London because, previous to 1914, all stage styles were more moderate than they are to-day. And during the five years of fighting that followed

London maintained an even increased that moderation. Soldiers home on leave flung themselves desperately into Piccadilly's pleasures. Revues were the most popular form of entertainment during the war. They took the mind off the front. But they were not elaborate revues. John Bull was putting every cent he had into shells and airplanes. He frowned on dollars spent on finery.

London, emerging from the war, has been faster getting back to normal than some countries. But war censorship still held on. Censorship closed the dancing clubs early. Censorship limited the drinking hours. And censorship—both official and the censorship of public opinion—seemed to prevail over the stage, too.

He was a shrewd showman who, this year, analyzed London's Rinto and decided it was due for a change; who was willing to risk censorship in a radical departure from the usual type of British musical show; and who foresaw, further-

more, that the British theatre-going public would "fall" and "fall" hard—as the Americans say—for the change.

There is a story going the rounds of the green rooms that the change was inspired by the experience of one producer in sending to the United States a company typical of the sort that had been hailed along the Strand as something original and very snappy.

The English



**Here is
Dorothy
Dickson
Wearing Her
Startling
"Falling Leaf" Cloak
of Orange Tissue
Shot with Autumn Leaves of Red and Gold.**

**Princess Andrew of
Russia Designed This
Trouserette Creation
for Heather Thatcher,
Who Wears It While
Giving a Spotlight
Interpretation of an
Egyptian Harem
Dance.**

**Below, the Glorified
Hula-Hula Dancer
Is Miss Dickson
Again, This
Time in a
Drapery of
Glossiest Silk.**



producer thought surely America would hail London's best with tumultuous bravos. He got the shock of his life. For New York gave his show one look—and yawned. His stuff was, he was told, so old and so conservative that it couldn't be anything but a "flivver." And that is exactly what it was.

That producer took a tip from his failure. So did some others. They examined the New York revues. They saw what New York considered original and dressy—and undressy. It was something several degrees beyond anything in London. And the producers said:

"If this goes big in New York, why wouldn't it go big in London? If Broadway likes and approves these garish gowns, these wild dances, these beauties in tights and spangles, why wouldn't Piccadilly approve them? Why, in fact, shouldn't we go Broadway 'one better'?"

So that, now, is what London theatrical managers are trying to do—go Broadway "one better." And London cabarets, music halls and private clubs are following in the path blazed by the revue promoter. They are giving their patrons all the shocks they can muster in sensational tableaux, dances and spectacles. And their patrons are not shocked. They like it.

Murray's is one of the leading night clubs in London. A year ago, when Scotland Yard was waging war on bohemia, Murray's was rather decorous. It had a jazz orchestra, and it had dancing, and it had prizes spun wheel. But it omitted any cabaret features. The manager believed his guests did not care for anything so "Parisian" or "American."

This year he has changed his policy. The bright star at Murray's is Miss Dorothy Hazel, specialty dancer, and Miss Hazel's specialty dance is performed in a costume that makes her look like nothing so much as a brilliant Bird of Paradise. Her short skirt and colonial bodice are made of maribou fur as downy as a hummingbird's throat. And atop her golden curls is a little cap made of a bird's head.

Dancers at Murray's forgot their dignity and craned their necks the first night Miss Hazel spun into the centre of the dance floor and pirouetted for five minutes in this cute little suit. The manager probably held his breath. But he needn't have worried. She was a hit from the start—and for costume. And now she has added to her wardrobe a number of other creations more startling than the first.

"Have you seen that pippo at Murray's?" is the question one hears everywhere in the West End these days. And along with it are "Let's toddle down to the Winter Garden, Freddy, and get a Parisian thrill!"